

In the Abstract:

Please replace the originally filed abstract with the attached abstract. The abstract is being replaced because it was required in the parent application to be amended to present less than 150 words. The present replacement abstract conforms to the replacement paragraph accepted in the parent application.

ABSTRACT

A system and method for tracking and controlling access to objects such as keys includes a lockable storage cabinet adapted to receive, store, and dispense objects within transparent security containers. A control computer is operably coupled to the cabinet. Information about objects, such as their weight, an image, or magnetic characteristics, is extracted by sensors when the objects within their containers are dispensed to a user or checked in by a user. This information is compared to a data base of the same information previously extracted for these objects. From the comparison, the connected control computer verifies that the objects present in the security container are the objects expected to be in the security container. If they are not, then theft or tampering is indicated and the computer takes remedial actions such as setting alarms or notifying security personnel.